

# The Infected Blood Public Inquiry NEWSLETTER



THE  
HAEMOPHILIA  
SOCIETY

## *A summary of remote inquiry hearings*

This week the inquiry has heard evidence from three clinicians as well as a presentation about Manchester Haemophilia Centre.

Dr David Bevan, from St George's Hospital in Tooting and Dr Janet Shirley from Frimley Park Hospital's associate haemophilia centre offered insights into treating patients during the 1980s in smaller centres.

Dr Bevan, who became centre director in 1985, said the

emergence of HIV in the UK in the 1980s was "the most terrifying phase of my professional life". He said there was a feeling that HIV was "running out of control".

The presentation on Manchester Haemophilia Centre contained "gaps" said counsel to the inquiry, Jenni Richards QC, and at times was a "confusing and mixed" picture in the 1970s and 1980s due to a lack of evidence from the main con-

sultants and centre directors during that period.

Prof Peter Collins, director of Cardiff Haemophilia Centre from 1996—2017 said the impact of contaminated blood would "echo down the generations" and felt it was important younger haematologists understood that this was not a historic event but an "ongoing" issue. He paid tribute to his "extraordinary" patients and their families.

## *Inquiry news in focus*

Dr Shirley had one patient who was infected with HIV as a result of treatment he received in late December 1984, just days after the UKHCDO had drafted new guidance that heat-treated products should be given to patients where possible. Dr Shirley did not see this guidance before treating her patient. A moderate haemophiliac who had been treated infrequently, her patient had a severe muscle bleed which was treated with cryoprecipitate and then unheated NHS product. Dr Shirley said she had always felt "very sorry and guilty" over his HIV, which resulted in his death in the 1990s. She told the inquiry that it was hospital policy to test for HIV without patients' knowledge because of concern that they might be refused insurance if they had to declare it.

## Quotes of the week

"Already in 2021 Covid has affected our plans, as it has affected the plans of so many others. It is important to make progress with the hearings but it is vital to stay safe. The way those two considerations fit together means that we cannot do things as we would have wished."

Sir Brian Langstaff

"The fact is I think that they [senior haemophilia doctors] held the line to the point where it almost became like denial.. into 1983. I think to continue to propose that there was no conclusive evidence that AIDS was caused by an infectious agent was simply, in retrospect of course, untenable. "

Dr David Bevan

"Things were very different in ..the 1980s ..and people's attitudes were different and we didn't tell patients nearly as much about the risks of treatment as we would nowadays. So, yes, .. I accept that, as a matter of principle, that is the correct thing to do but I can't say that in the 1980s it would have been considered the correct thing to do as a matter of principle then."

Dr Janet Shirley